

# In the United States Court of Federal Claims

## OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS

No. 20-352V

UNPUBLISHED

JAMES WETZEL,

Petitioner,

v.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

Chief Special Master Corcoran

Filed: May 6, 2022

Special Processing Unit (SPU); Joint  
Stipulation on Damages; Influenza  
(Flu) Vaccine; Shoulder Injury  
Related to Vaccine Administration  
(SIRVA)

*Emily Beth Ashe, Anapol Weiss, Philadelphia, PA, for Petitioner.*

*Catherine Elizabeth Stolar, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, for  
Respondent.*

### **DECISION ON JOINT STIPULATION<sup>1</sup>**

On March 27, 2020, James Wetzel filed a petition for compensation under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. §300aa-10, *et seq.*<sup>2</sup> (the “Vaccine Act”). Petitioner alleges that he suffered a Table injury – a Shoulder Injury Related to Vaccine Administration (“SIRVA”) – as a result of an influenza (“flu”) vaccination on October 3, 2018. Amended Petition, filed November 25, 2020, at 1; Stipulation, filed May 6, 2022, at ¶¶ 1-2, 4. Petitioner further alleges the vaccine was administered within the United States, that he suffered the residual effects of his injury for more than six months, and that there has been no prior award or settlement of a civil action on his behalf as a result of his injury. Stipulation at ¶¶ 3-5; see Amended Petition at ¶¶ 3, 12, 16. “Respondent denies that [P]etitioner sustained a Table injury for SIRVA, and denies that the flu vaccine caused [P]etitioner to suffer a right shoulder injury or any other injury.” Stipulation at ¶ 6.

<sup>1</sup> Because this unpublished Decision contains a reasoned explanation for the action in this case, I am required to post it on the United States Court of Federal Claims' website in accordance with the E-Government Act of 2002. 44 U.S.C. § 3501 note (2012) (Federal Management and Promotion of Electronic Government Services). **This means the Decision will be available to anyone with access to the internet.** In accordance with Vaccine Rule 18(b), Petitioner has 14 days to identify and move to redact medical or other information, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy. If, upon review, I agree that the identified material fits within this definition, I will redact such material from public access.

<sup>2</sup> National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-660, 100 Stat. 3755. Hereinafter, for ease of citation, all section references to the Vaccine Act will be to the pertinent subparagraph of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa (2012).

Nevertheless, on May 6, 2022, the parties filed the attached joint stipulation, stating that a decision should be entered awarding compensation. I find the stipulation reasonable and adopt it as my decision awarding damages, on the terms set forth therein.

Pursuant to the terms stated in the attached Stipulation, I **award** the following compensation:

- A. A lump sum of \$96,000.00 in the form of a check payable to Petitioner; and**
- B. A lump sum of \$217.75, representing reimbursement of a Medicaid lien for services rendered to Petitioner by the State of New York, in the form of a check payable jointly to Petitioner and the New York State Department of Health:**

**New York State Department of Health  
Resource Department  
1031 Department Court  
Kingston, NY 12401**

**Petitioner agrees to endorse this check to the New York State Department of Health.**

**Stipulation at ¶ 8. These amounts represent compensation for all items of damages that would be available under Section 15(a). *Id.***

I approve the requested amount for Petitioner's compensation. In the absence of a motion for review filed pursuant to RCFC Appendix B, the Clerk of Court is directed to enter judgment in accordance with this decision.<sup>3</sup>

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

**s/Brian H. Corcoran**  
Brian H. Corcoran  
Chief Special Master

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<sup>3</sup> Pursuant to Vaccine Rule 11(a), entry of judgment can be expedited by the parties' joint filing of notice renouncing the right to seek review.

- IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS**

the flu vaccine caused petitioner to suffer a right shoulder injury or any other injury.

7. Maintaining their above-stated positions, the parties nevertheless now agree that the issues between them shall be settled and that a decision should be entered awarding the compensation described in paragraph 8 of this Stipulation.

8. As soon as practicable after an entry of judgment reflecting a decision consistent with the terms of this Stipulation, and after petitioner has filed an election to receive compensation pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-21(a)(1), the Secretary of Health and Human Services will issue the following vaccine compensation payments:

- A. A lump sum of **\$96,000.00** in the form of a check payable to petitioner;  
and
- B. A lump sum of **\$217.75**,<sup>1</sup> representing reimbursement of a Medicaid lien for services rendered to petitioner by the State of New York, in the form of a check payable jointly to petitioner and the New York State Department of Health:

New York State Department of Health  
Resource Department  
1031 Department Court  
Kingston, NY 12401

Petitioner agrees to endorse this check to the New York State Department of Health.

These amounts represent compensation for all damages that would be available under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a).

9. As soon as practicable after the entry of judgment on entitlement in this case, and after petitioner has filed both a proper and timely election to receive compensation pursuant to

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<sup>1</sup> This amount represents full satisfaction of any right of subrogation, assignment, claim, lien, or cause of action the State of New York may have against any individual as a result of any Medicaid payments the New York State Department of Health has made to or on behalf of James Wetzel as a result of his alleged vaccine-related injury suffered on or about October 3, 2018, under Title XIX of the Social Security Act. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(g), (h).

42 U.S.C. § 300aa-21(a)(1), and an application, the parties will submit to further proceedings before the special master to award reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incurred in proceeding upon this petition.

10. Petitioner and his attorney represent that compensation to be provided pursuant to this Stipulation is not for any items or services for which the Program is not primarily liable under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(g), to the extent that payment has been made or can reasonably be expected to be made under any State compensation programs, insurance policies, Federal or State health benefits programs (other than Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 1396 et seq.)), or by entities that provide health services on a pre-paid basis.

11. Payment made pursuant to paragraph 8 of this Stipulation and any amounts awarded pursuant to paragraph 9 of this Stipulation will be made in accordance with 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(i), subject to the availability of sufficient statutory funds.

12. The parties and their attorneys further agree and stipulate that, except for any award for attorneys' fees and litigation costs, and past unreimbursed expenses, the money provided pursuant to this Stipulation will be used solely for the benefit of petitioner as contemplated by a strict construction of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a) and (d), and subject to the conditions of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(g) and (h).

13. In return for the payments described in paragraphs 8 and 9, petitioner, in his individual capacity, and on behalf of his heirs, executors, administrators, successors or assigns, does forever irrevocably and unconditionally release, acquit and discharge the United States and the Secretary of Health and Human Services from any and all actions or causes of action (including agreements, judgments, claims, damages, loss of services, expenses and all demands of whatever kind or nature) that have been brought, could have been brought, or could be timely



brought in the Court of Federal Claims, under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-10 et seq., on account of, or in any way growing out of, any and all known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected personal injuries to or death of petitioner resulting from, or alleged to have resulted from, the flu vaccination administered on October 3, 2018, as alleged by petitioner in a petition for vaccine compensation filed on or about March 27, 2020, in the United States Court of Federal Claims as petition No. 20-352V.

14. If petitioner should die prior to entry of judgment, this agreement shall be voidable upon proper notice to the Court on behalf of either or both of the parties.

15. If the special master fails to issue a decision in complete conformity with the terms of this Stipulation or if the Court of Federal Claims fails to enter judgment in conformity with a decision that is in complete conformity with the terms of this Stipulation, then the parties' settlement and this Stipulation shall be voidable at the sole discretion of either party.

16. This Stipulation expresses a full and complete negotiated settlement of liability and damages claimed under the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, as amended, except as otherwise noted in paragraph 9 above. There is absolutely no agreement on the part of the parties hereto to make any payment or to do any act or thing other than is herein expressly stated and clearly agreed to. The parties further agree and understand that the award described in this Stipulation may reflect a compromise of the parties' respective positions as to liability and/or amount of damages, and further, that a change in the nature of the injury or condition or in the items of compensation sought, is not grounds to modify or revise this agreement.

17. This Stipulation shall not be construed as an admission by the United States or the Secretary of Health and Human Services that petitioner sustained a Table injury, or that the flu vaccine either caused or significantly aggravated petitioner's alleged injury or any other injury.




Respectfully submitted,


**PETITIONER:**

  
JAMES WETZEL

**ATTORNEY OF RECORD FOR  
PETITIONER:**

  
EMILY B. ASHE  
Anapol Weiss  
One Logan Square  
130 North 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1600  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
Tel.: (215) 735-8037  
Email: eashe@anapolweiss.com

**AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:**

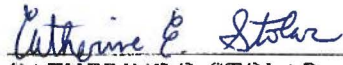
  
HEATHER L. PEARLMAN  
Deputy Director  
Torts Branch, Civil Division  
U.S. Department of Justice  
P.O. Box 146  
Benjamin Franklin Station  
Washington, DC 20044-0146

**AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH  
AND HUMAN SERVICES:**

George R. Grimes - Digitally signed by George R.  
Grimes 514  
S14 Date: 2022.04.11 15:11:27 -04'00

CDR GEORGE REED GRIMES, MD. MPH  
Director, Division of Injury  
Compensation Programs  
Health Systems Bureau  
Health Resources and Services  
Administration  
U.S. Department of Health  
and Human Services  
5600 Fishers Lane, 08N146B  
Rockville, MD 20857

**ATTORNEY OF RECORD FOR  
RESPONDENT:**

  
CATHERINE E. STOLAR  
Trial Attorney  
Torts Branch, Civil Division  
U.S. Department of Justice  
P.O. Box 146  
Benjamin Franklin Station  
Washington, DC 20044-0146  
Tel.: (202) 353-3299  
Fax: (202) 616-4310  
Email: catherine.stolar@usdoj.gov

Dated: 5/6/2022